

John Hamilton Sr. was born in Saintsfield, County of Down, Ireland, on July 12, 1807, son of Abel and Mary Jamieson Hamilton. The only written record of his life is in a diary he kept in his own handwriting. The following is quoted directly from the diary as he wrote it:

"I was raised with my father and mother in Hillsborough, County of Down, and learned the whitesmith trade with my father.

"On the 22nd of May, 1827, I married the third daughter of John and Mary Creighton and on the 22nd of June, 1830, she brought forth a son, whose name was William. On June 13, 1832, we had another son, whose name was Samuel. August 6, 1834, we had another son, whose name was John (Jr.), which was the last child we had.

"Our son William died February 1, 1839.

"My wife and I were strictly brought up in the Church of England, which we thought was the true church till the fall of 1840. Elder Theadore Curtis was sent from Manchester to Ireland on a mission and stopped at Hillsborough, and when we heard the gospel he preached it made a great change in us, and on the 4th or 5th of November, 1840, we were baptized, and then the devil began to howl. Brother Curtis never spoke of gathering, but about two days after we were baptized I spoke to him about coming to Zion and he told me I had got the spirit of gathering.

"I carried on the smith trade from the time I was married till November, 1842, when I commenced to make ready for a start, when I sailed from Belfast to Liverpool on December 31, 1843. We had to stay in Liverpool on account of high winds, till the 16th before we sailed. After a pleasant voyage we landed in New Orleans on the 15th of March, 1843. The name of the ship was the "Swanton," of Bath, and her captain's name was Davenport. He was very kind to the passengers. On the night of the 17th of March we sailed up the Mississippi River in a steamboat called the "Goddess of Liberty." It was a very hard winter up north, and the water was very low and could not come much speed. When we got to St. Louis we had to take a lighter boat to take us to Nauvoo and to wait eleven days there till the river broke up, and we landed in Nauvoo on the 12th of April, 1843.

"When the Prophet Joseph seen us coming up the river, he, with Brothers Hyrum and Kimball, came down to the river to meet us. Brother Lorenzo Snow was in charge of the company from Liverpool, and a good man he was. I had a letter of introduction from Brother Andrew Henry to William Law, who was counselor to the Prophet, at the time, and I wrought (blacksmithed) for him 31 days and then rented the shop and tools till I built a house and shop for myself, which was a little above the Temple. When I went on my tenth day to work on the Temple, the stone cutter petitioned the committee any wages in reason to get me to stop and do their tools, so I stopped and did the smith work on the Temple.

"During this time the mob and apostates did all they could to annoy the Saints. The Laws and Fosters and two sons of Judge Nibley, who apostatized and joined the mob. The apostates published a paper called the Nauvoo Expositor, full of lies and slander. Joseph was the Mayor of the City and called the city council together and declared the paper a nuisance, so they broke open the door and destroyed the press and type. I was present when it was done. Then the howl went (was) up and they entered lawsuit against Joseph and a writ was issued for his arrest.

"Joseph called the Legion out to speak to them, and he said they wanted to butcher

him. He stood on a small frame of a house and put his hands up and called on the Great Eloheim, if he had the work done He gave him to do done, that death would be sweeter than honey in the comb, and said Amen to it, and everyone said Amen. But we did not think we were sanctioning his death till it was too late.

"Joseph just preached once on the stand after (this), which was a discourse on plurality of the Gods. A few days after he went across the river to come west, when some of the fearful Saints went and pleaded with him to come back. He said the spirit told him to go west. One said: 'Brother Joseph, you said you would die for this people.' He said: 'So I will die for them,' and he came back and gave himself up. Then Hyrum and Joseph started for Carthage when they met a posse coming for the government—when they turned back and delivered themselves up to the posse and came up Mulholland Street."

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